

Draft Report for Public Comment

Creating a World-class, Learner-focused
Education System for Washington

This draft of possible strategies is based on the work of the Washington Learns Steering Committee and upon the advice it received from the Early Learning Council, the K-12 Advisory Committee and the Higher Education Advisory Committee.

It does **not** represent a draft final report, but rather a set of possible strategies for the public to review and provide feedback to the Steering Committee.

A final report is due by November 15, 2006.

Introduction

Our world is rapidly changing, and our education system requires a parallel change to prepare our children to participate in the new economy. In this technology-focused, instantaneous environment, a software designer in Redmond is as likely to compete with a worker in Bangladesh as with one in Silicon Valley. A grocery store stocker in Spokane is part of a complex supply chain that stretches around the globe and that can change overnight with the push of a button. Information and communications easily ignore state and national borders, time zones, and outdated expectations. The foundation for this new world isn't made of bricks and mortar, and it isn't whom you know or where you live. The foundation is knowledge.

Knowledge is the new world currency, and Washington's education system must produce that currency in new ways if our children are to succeed.

Today, we must establish a new goal:

Washington is committed to delivering a world-class, learner-focused education system.

Imagine an education system that gives every child the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. Imagine an education system that entices people of all ages and abilities to seek more education and training to improve their lives and the lives of their children. Imagine classes of thinkers, who learn not just rote answers but also the skills of adapting to changing circumstances and using creativity to find solutions. Imagine an education system that stimulates our appetite for music and arts while it prepares us for productive careers.

Right now, we have the opportunity to invest in knowledge as global currency and to give our citizens the ability to compete and succeed. This opportunity calls for vision and for bold initiatives for reform. It demands our sustained commitment because it will not be easy. Comprehensive changes to our education system will not happen immediately. But with a statewide, public and private, long-term commitment to changes that bring results, we can and will deliver a world-class, learner-focused education system.

BACKGROUND

At the Governor's request, the 2005 Legislature created Washington Learns to conduct a thorough review of the state's entire education system—early learning, K-12 and

post-secondary education—and to issue final recommendations by November 2006.¹ This short timeline and expansive scope present both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge comes from the magnitude of significant issues to be examined, including many that are steeped in technical complexity or mired in political difficulty.

But the opportunity presented by this examination of the entire education system is the chance to develop holistic solutions that move us closer to an integrated, world-class, learner-focused education system for Washington.

RAISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IS OUR PRIMARY GOAL

Over the past year we have learned a great deal about both the strengths and weaknesses of our state education systems, and it has become clear that the knowledge economy requires a new mission for education—to educate everyone to achieve at higher levels.

Put simply, we must simultaneously raise the bar for everyone and close the gap that academically sidelines too many of our students today.

The reality is that more Washingtonians need higher levels of education—of all forms. A high school diploma is no longer the ticket to a family-wage job, but not everyone needs four years of college either. Research shows that even one additional year of college or workforce training can result in a far better paycheck. At the same time, highly educated people, with math, science, technology, engineering and other advanced degrees, drive our economy. We must create opportunities for everyone to get some post-secondary education, and provide multiple pathways to attaining the advanced degrees that are in high demand.

No one sector of the education system can achieve this ambitious goal alone. We must shift our thinking from that of separate, independent pre-schools, middle schools, colleges and universities towards an education system that is integrated—from birth through adulthood—and characterized by a deep commitment to shared responsibility and accountability for results.

The happiness of Washingtonians and the health of our world-class economy depend on it.

¹ E2SSB 5441

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE OUR FUTURE

A world-class education system prepares all learners to live and work in a global, multicultural world. Tomorrow's workers will be managing global work teams that meet in virtual offices. They will be buying and selling products and services to people in Belgium and Bangkok, as well as Baltimore and Bellevue. Tomorrow's citizens will be solving issues of global proportions that transcend international boundaries. To achieve this world-class system, five principles guide our thinking:

The fundamental principle is **accountability**. A world-class education system requires us to compare ourselves to the best education systems in the nation and the world and to hold ourselves accountable for results. **All** of us—not just state government or schools and colleges, but also parents and families, communities, businesses, civic organizations and private philanthropy—must join the conversation about improvement and results. Setting goals is not enough. We must persistently measure progress toward our goals and report results regularly. This kind of systemic accountability will require new transparent reporting and accounting systems that can tie expenditures clearly to outcomes, as well as forums at the state level and in communities for these important conversations.

Second, a **learner-focused** education system relentlessly focuses on each individual student. We must shift our basic thinking to measuring outcomes, not in the traditional Carnegie Unit, or in class time, but in what a student actually knows and can do. Students can and should move at their own pace, with learning tailored to individual styles and educational needs. Technology can help us implement this vision by allowing virtual access to education materials and delivering specialized, individualized teaching to learners.

Therefore, a learner-focused system requires that we redesign and personalize our schools. The old 3Rs (readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic) are joined by a new set of R's—rigor, relevance and relationships.

Rigor means that all students have the chance to succeed at challenging classes, such as algebra, geometry, chemistry and writing.

Relevance means that courses and projects excite students to learn, to excel, and to see the connection between what they are learning and their futures.

Relationships means that students have adult mentors who help them to plan for the future and who encourage them to succeed.

Third, parent involvement is an essential ingredient at every step on the education path. Families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more.

Families of all income groups and education levels, from all ethnic and cultural groups, are active in supporting their children's learning at home, but white, middle-class families tend to be more involved at school. An important strategy for raising overall educational attainment is to encourage more involvement at school by all parents.²

Fourth is a fundamental "R," a commitment to obtaining the financial and human resources to deliver quality education. Maintaining current funding levels will not get us to a world-class, learner-focused education system within the coming decade. Current dollars may need to be redirected as we look for greater efficiencies and invest in strategies with proven results. We have high expectations—for students, parents, and schools—and we will need to commit the funds necessary to realize those expectations. Similarly, recruiting and retaining the best providers, teachers, administrators and faculty for our schools and universities will require us to address base pay and develop pay systems that recognize the value of educational work and reward improved student outcomes.

Fifth, the business of education is people. We need the very best people to guide our learners. The vast majority of education expenditures train and compensate the providers, teachers, administrators, and faculty, plus all the support staff that drive the buses, staff the libraries, clean the floors, serve the food, connect the wires, support the software, repair the roofs, provide security, and myriad other activities that allow learning to occur in the classroom. We must commit ourselves to recruiting, training and supporting the very best people for our education system.

INTEGRATED STRATEGIES ARE NEEDED

In the spirit of this new imperative, Washington Learns is proposing eight bold reforms, each with several possible strategies for success. These proposals for reform are seamless, bringing together contributions from every part of the education system to renew, reform and integrate our education system into a coherent whole. We aim for proposals that will transform the education system, be meaningful for students and inspire our citizens. These reforms are described in the pages that follow.

² A New Wave of Evidence, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002. Available at <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam33.html>.

The Early Learning Years: A New Imperative

- ✓ Support Parents, Families and Communities
- ✓ Expand High Quality Child Care and Early Education Opportunities

Brain-development research in young children informs us that children are born learning. Research at the University of Washington and other institutions highlights the amazing learning capacity of the very young. Through early experiences, the basic architecture of the brain is built, and the quality of that architecture determines whether learning and behavior will be sturdy or fragile. As the brain matures, the ability to process complex information builds on the circuits developed to process basic information. Hence, the development of higher-level capabilities is more difficult if lower level circuits are not wired properly.

We view the years from birth to age 8 as the “learning to learn” period, in which a child becomes a capable reader, writer, mathematician, artist, musician, creative thinker, and speaker of more than one language, a person who develops bonds with others, is empathetic, works well in groups, and lives with the rules. With these assets, children will be prepared for the learning that occurs beyond 3rd grade: reading, writing, thinking, and communicating about subjects more deeply, and connecting and applying their learning to new topics and personal interests.

A survey of kindergarten teachers in 2004 found that more than half of entering kindergarteners were not ready for school. The child who is not ready at kindergarten starts behind his or her peers, often struggles through school, and becomes part of the “preparation gap.”

Economists and educators have found that investments in high quality early learning, especially for at-risk children, yield significant benefits. The Perry Preschool Study found that \$8 was saved for every dollar invested in early learning, as costs associated with remedial education, special education, abuse and neglect, health care, school drop-out rates, teen pregnancy, crime and incarceration were all significantly reduced.³

We should rethink and reform our strategies for supporting parents, children and families during the earliest years and link those strategies clearly to the early years of school (K-3).

³ L.J. Schweinhart, J. Montie, Z. Xiang, W.S. Barnett, C.R. Belfield & M. Nores (2005) Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40, 2005.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

The strategies suggested are market-based, focused on increasing parent and community demand for early learning choices that meet high quality standards and produce measurable improvements in the school readiness of young children.

Support Parents, Families and Communities

Parents, including guardians who act in the role of parents, are their child's first and best teachers. Every parent wants his or her child to thrive. But many parents are perplexed about what to do through midnight feedings, teething, tantrums and the many challenges they face. Voluntary, culturally appropriate supports can help parents be effective caregivers, teachers and advocates for young children.

- Make parenting information, translated into multiple languages, readily available through workplaces, libraries, faith communities, websites and other places frequented by parents, grandparents and other caregivers.
- Provide a continuum of voluntary supports that respond to the needs of individual families and children. Although the school preparedness gap extends broadly, low-income children and children of color are disproportionately represented in "at-risk" categories. Research indicates that intensive home-based services such as Nurse-Family Partnerships are effective in improving outcomes for at-risk young children.
- Foster supportive relationships within local communities. Public support and creative solutions will be maximized if local communities are encouraged to address the diverse early learning needs of families with young children.

Expand High Quality Child Care and Early Education Opportunities

When parents look for an early education program for their child, they ask first, "Will my child be safe? Can I trust the caregivers and teachers to respond to my child's needs?" Next come questions about what their child will do and learn and whether the program is affordable, convenient and has a schedule that allows the parent to work.

- Improve the safety and quality of existing child care and early education programs by equipping parents with the information they need to make good choices, by strengthening the regulatory system, and by encouraging quality improvements through incentives and support.

Research strongly links increased teacher qualifications and compensation to positive relationships between children and their teachers, and improved early learning outcomes for children.

- Support professional development and improved compensation for child care and early education teachers.
- Expand capacity in higher education to produce well-trained, culturally-competent child care providers and early education teachers.

High quality early learning focuses on the individual needs of children and recognizes that children's patterns of learning vary across communities and cultures.

- Develop and implement a kindergarten readiness assessment tool to be used by teachers, parents and caregivers to learn about the development of kindergarten students. The assessment will acknowledge all aspects of development, including cultural differences among children, and will support smooth transitions from early learning to kindergarten.
- Provide full-day kindergarten programs for all students. Currently, half-day kindergarten programs are available to all students, and some full-day opportunities exist where parents pay tuition or where other funding sources are available, such as local levy funds, grant funds or I-728 funds.
- Implement world-class primary classrooms that are flexible in meeting the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and language skills of young learners. A few schools currently use an "ungraded primary" plan in which students in grades K-3 are not placed in grade-level labeled classrooms, but work in various reading, writing, math, physical and social groups according to their skills. World-class primaries would also include music, art, science and multiple language learning opportunities, all within a nurturing environment.

Math and Science: A Renewed Focus

- ✓ Focus on the Curriculum
- ✓ Strengthen Math and Science Teaching
- ✓ Expand High Demand Math and Science Education Opportunities
- ✓ Encourage Community Interest and Support

Math and science are the foundation of the knowledge economy of today and the creativity economy of tomorrow. Today, Washington ranks among the top ten states in scientists and computer specialists per capita and leads the nation in engineers per capita.⁴ But many of these scientists and engineers were imported from other states and nations, not educated in Washington. Only one-fifth of Washington's college graduates receive degrees in these fields.

Our math and science student pipeline should be full of eager learners. Imagine the curiosity created by young fingers exploring a tide pool, or the excited buzz of teams calculating which train gets to the station first. Imagine eyes intently fixed on the angles between balls on a pool table. These experiences and others can help our students learn and apply the principles of math and science.

Washington's knowledge economy continues to demand more workers with science, technology, engineering and mathematical skills. At the same time, the number of students earning two- or four-year degrees in these fields continues to decline. We must, simultaneously, make more room in our colleges and universities for students who wish to major in math and science programs, and improve academic preparation and student demand for math and science degrees.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Focus on the Curriculum

Our students must not only improve their skills in math and science practices and concepts, they must also compete internationally in these subjects. Our state assessments illustrate that at all grade levels students find math and science challenging. On a national level, U.S. eighth graders rank 9th out of twelve international democracies in mathematics achievement.⁵

⁴ US Department of Commerce (2004) State Science & Technology Indicators

⁵ Ginsberg, Allen, Cook, G. Leinward, S. Noell and Pollack, E. (2005) Reassessing US Mathematics Performance: New Findings for the 2003 TIMSS and PISA, American Institutes for Research.

- Undertake a review of math and science standards for alignment with international standards.
- Establish a limited menu of math and science curricula, diagnostic assessments, supplemental materials and professional development opportunities that align with state standards.
- Introduce basic math and science concepts in early learning settings
- Expect rigor and relevancy in math courses by eliminating general math in middle and high schools and by enriching math and science classes with applied, creative, and project-based approaches.
- Charge the State Board of Education with defining world-class math and science high school graduation requirements.

More learning opportunities are developed through the use of technology; math and science are no exception.

- Increase access to K-12 online math and science programs. Tutoring and remedial programs can pinpoint skill and concept difficulties and respond immediately by providing additional instruction and practice. Also available online are more advanced courses that are not available at a student's school, this can be a cost-effective means of providing a richer curriculum. While Internet courses are not for all students, they do provide a way to personalize and deepen the educational experience for many.
- Offer more college math and science classes online to serve students who are unable to get to a college campus or who learn better using technology.

Strengthen Math and Science Teaching

Teachers will need training and support to transform their classrooms into richer, more challenging math and science learning environments.

- Increase college math and science course requirements for all prospective teachers. Our teaching force must master the material in order to better teach our students.
- Provide math-science professional development and training for the existing teacher corps
- Increase access to alternative routes to certification for math and science teachers. For example, the Alternative Route program is a one-year mentored internship for professionals who wish to earn a teaching credential. Over 90

percent of participants complete the program and are teaching in Washington public schools within one year.

- Increase access to conditional loans and scholarships for math and science teacher preparation programs. For example, the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment program encourages outstanding students to become math, science, special education or bilingual education teachers. Program participants receive scholarships or loan repayments in exchange for teaching in Washington public schools.
- Develop math and science training for early education teachers to include math and science concepts in early learning settings.

Expand High Demand Math and Science Higher Education Opportunities

- Establish public-private partnerships (such as the GET Ready for Math and Science Program) to provide scholarships for students who excel in math and science during middle and high school, and who enroll in selected math or science majors in college.
- Fund more spaces in colleges and universities for students seeking degrees in math and science programs where student demand exceeds program capacity.

Encourage Community Interest and Support

We know that students at all levels are capable of so much more in mathematics and science, but our culture often views math and science as for only a few, not for all of us. Community interest and opportunities supporting math and science accomplishments will offer role models, spark students' creativity, and celebrate our ability to succeed locally and globally.

- With private partners, develop a public education campaign designed to excite students and their parents about the importance of learning math and science and pursuing math and science careers. For example:
 - Coordinate, local, regional and state activities such as science fairs and competitions;
 - Promote the Washington Aerospace Scholars Program at the Museum of Flight;
 - Use television and the Internet to promote programs, leaders and events in math and science.

Technology: A Powerful Tool

- ✓ Provide Online Information
- ✓ Improve Technology Training

Washington is home to the world's technology leaders. As headquarters to numerous technology-based industries, Washington's education system should embrace technology as a tool for instruction, communication, professional development, policy evaluation, record keeping and program delivery. Our education system should be the primer for our technology economy.

Technology enables us to personalize the delivery of education in ways undreamed of just a few years ago. It expands instructional options and learning opportunities for all students, the struggling and the gifted. Technology allows individualized learning to occur all day, every day, not just within the confines of the subject period.

In higher education, technology is not only a teaching tool; it can fundamentally transform the business models for education and training. The virtual university can provide students everywhere with opportunities to upgrade skills, attend classes, visit the library, purchase books and supplies, and obtain career counseling without ever leaving their home.

Increasingly, technology is not just a tool for learning, but an important subject to learn. Technology-based industries lead Washington's economy, accounting for the largest share of employment, business activity and labor income of any major sector. Employment in technology-based industries included more than 300,000 private sector jobs in 2003.

Finally, technology makes sophisticated data collection and analysis possible. By tracking individual student progress, we can tailor instruction to individual needs and learning styles. Technology allows access to coursework and professional development materials, it allows schools to maintain chat rooms for student discussions and websites for daily homework assignments, and it can revolutionize how teachers, students and parents communicate.

The next generation has already integrated technology into their lives, and they adapt to new developments as fast as they become available. Effective use of the latest technology to deliver education to students who are already technologically competent allows for both increased rigor and increased relevance.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Provide Online Information

Providing information online allows students, parents and teachers better access to the information at their convenience, with a more sophisticated ability to track data.

- Enhance the use of technology and the media to improve parenting supports including information parents need to choose safe, high quality child care and early education programs.
- Invest in an early learning information system to provide clear and timely information for parents and providers, streamline regulation, and track early learning outcomes.
- Develop a core of centralized curricula, tailored to the needs of individual students, for use by teachers and students.
- Provide online options for completion of coursework, access to advanced courses, practice and reinforcement of class lessons, tutoring, and exploration of future career options.

Improve Technology Training

- Update the technology requirements for teacher preparation and professional development.
- Assist school districts in technology purchasing, maintenance and software support through a coordinated program that uses the state's purchasing power to reduce costs.
- Expand access to computer science and technology degrees in colleges and universities.

Investments: The Path to Success

- ✓ Expand Early Education Quality
- ✓ Increase Learning Time
- ✓ Align Expectations
- ✓ Develop Skillful Teaching and Compensation
- ✓ Establish Investment Parameters

Imagine a future in which Washington students have the world's best teachers in their classrooms and the best leaders for their schools and colleges. Smart, strategic investments enable the delivery of world-class education from early learning to K-12 and post-secondary study. Students have mastered the state standards, excelled in their fields of choice and benefited from our learner-focused philosophy. They are prepared for thoughtful citizenship and successful careers. Employers hire Washington residents because they have the skills, creativity and education that fuel innovation and our economy.

Economists have documented the economic and social benefits gained when we invest in education. For every one-percent increase in the percentage of college graduates in an urban labor market, high school dropouts' wages go up by 1.9 percent, high school graduates' wages go up by 1.6 percent, and college graduates' wages go up by 0.4 percent.⁶ Higher education attainment is also associated with reductions in criminal activity. Society benefits through avoided incarceration costs as well as higher rates of labor force participation and earnings. One study found that each additional high school graduate would save society \$2,100 in reduced public costs.⁷

Investments create the means to realize our ambitious goals. They will be smart, strategic and intentional, with a relentless focus on results. A commitment to sustained and focused efforts over the next decade will build a world-class, learner-focused education system. And, while we will not be able to fix our quality gaps overnight, we must begin today.

⁶ Moretti, Enrico. (2002) Estimating the social return to higher education: evidence from longitudinal and repeated cross-sectional data. *Journal of Econometrics*, 121, 175-212.

⁷ Lochner & Moretti (2003) found that a 1% increase in high school graduation rates nationally would save \$1.4 billion, about \$2,100 per high school graduate.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Expand Early Education Quality

Regulated child care programs provide early learning services for more than 100,000 infants, toddlers and preschool-aged children in Washington. While teacher education and compensation are linked to positive early learning outcomes, teachers in child care centers are required to have only a high school degree plus 20 hours of training within six months of employment, and earn an average of \$10.16 an hour or about \$20,000 a year.

- Improve the quality of child care and early education programs through a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). QRIS will provide clear expectations, program support and incentives to increase the quality of child care and early learning programs. Program ratings will provide parents and communities with information about the type and quality of programs available. Tiered reimbursement amounts will be tied to program quality and improved teacher education and compensation.

Increase Learning Time

Time is a precious commodity. For some students, there is not enough time in the day to grasp what they need to know. For other students, there is not enough time because they want to learn more about a topic, but the teacher says it is time to move on. For some students the usual classroom pace is so slow that they find it difficult to stay engaged.

- Develop new ways of organizing learning time. Creatively group students and staff assignments to meet different learning needs.
- Lengthen the school day and school year. Currently students attend school for approximately six hours a day for one hundred eighty days a year, a calendar that was created to allow students time off to help with the harvest. In the new knowledge economy, it no longer makes sense to schedule school time around farming needs.
- Provide additional learning time to struggling students and in targeted instances to improve student learning in core academic subjects.

Align Expectations

Inefficiencies in our current system of education occur at the seams, as students move from one sector to the next - from high school to college, for instance. High school graduates often find they need remedial courses before pursuing college credits. The elimination inefficiencies at the seams could free up resources to reinvest in the quality of education.

- Align curriculum and learning expectations between high school and college.
 - High school graduates are often not prepared for the rigor of college, particularly in math. We should support partnerships like the Transition Math Project, a public-private partnership with the Gates Foundation, that brings K-12 teachers and faculty together to align mathematics curriculum.
 - High school students should be afforded the opportunity to assess their college readiness, during 10th or 11th grade, using commercially available college placement tests in mathematics and language arts.
 - The State Board of Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Board should work together to align high school graduation requirements and minimum college admissions standards, moving towards a system based on demonstrated competence for college level work, not seat-time.

Develop Skillful Teaching and Compensation

Teaching requires a deep understanding of the content taught, strategies for helping students learn that content and its application to their lives, and flexibility to assess what students need and adjust accordingly. The preparation and licensure system that certifies a teacher's readiness should provide the skill structure for world-class teaching in Washington. The professional development system should improve foundation skills while keeping the profession fresh and innovative. The compensation system should be aligned to the preparation and professional development programs so that we appropriately pay for what we expect.

- Create a state knowledge and skill-based teacher licensure system. The first step is to develop a state performance assessment for teachers seeking a professional level teaching certificate. This would create a common standard for determining readiness for a permanent teaching license. Currently each institution of higher education follows state program standards for teacher preparation, but determines independently whether a candidate is sufficiently prepared for a state teaching certificate.
- Add a K-12 performance component to the K-12 salary system that offers professional certificates upon demonstrations of performance and other factors. Salaries would reflect professional certification. Currently salary increases are based only on years of service and higher education credits earned.
- In the K-12 staff salary system, salaries should reflect regional cost-of-living differences, hard to staff schools, prior business and work experience, and provide building-based bonuses as incentives and recognition. Some school districts have recognized some of these factors in local salary agreements; however, the state has not included these in their compensation plan.

- Create an instructional coach training program and provide resources to schools to have instructional coaches on staff. Instructional coaches improve teaching methods and have been a key component in improving reading in many of Washington's elementary schools. Training and employment of these coaches is currently possible only to the extent that federal resources are available.

Educators need time to work with each other to examine student learning data and plan for meeting student needs. They also need time to grow professionally to meet the challenges of implementing a world-class education system.

- Deliver professional development programs designed to meet the specific needs of educators to improve student learning. Combine the efforts of state, national and international education experts and rely on the latest research to improve instruction. Technology tools and state, regional and local education institutions must be partners in this on-going effort.
- Provide 10 days for professional educational staff to engage in state authorized professional development and planning. Professional development should include curriculum content, differentiated instructional strategies and cultural awareness and understanding. Planning activities include examination of student performance and diagnostic data, program data and related instructional activities.

Establish Investment Parameters

As we look at education system investments it is helpful to understand how our investments relate to other organizations and states that are striving to succeed in the new economy. We recommend the Global Challenge States identified by NORED.⁸

These states are the top eight (Washington is number two) on the New Economy Index (NEI), plus Minnesota (13) and North Carolina (26). Minnesota and North Carolina, while not in the top ten on the NEI, have demographic and other characteristics that make their addition worthwhile. The GCS states are good proxies for us to measure our ability to compete effectively in the global economy.

We recommend the establishment of specific benchmarks for each sector to determine an appropriate funding level goal for improving our investment in quality education.

⁸ NORED was retained to provide expert assistance on higher education and workforce issues for Washington Learns. The Global Challenge States are based on the index developed by the Progressive Policy Institute, measuring states' ability to compete in the new economy. Global Challenge States are Massachusetts, Washington, California, Colorado, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, Minnesota and North Carolina.

- Increase base compensation for childhood and early education teachers, K-12 teachers and staff, benchmarked with the Global Challenge States.
- Establish the Global Challenge States as a financial metric for K-12 per-pupil funding.
- Establish the top tier of the Global Challenge States as the financial benchmark to determine the appropriate cost per student for our public colleges and universities.⁹
- Gradually increase state support and tuition levels at four-year colleges and universities to reach the top tier of the global challenge states.

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⁹ Washington currently ranks near the bottom of the 10 GCS states in the amount of state support for higher education and the level of tuition charged at our four-year colleges and universities.

Access: College and Workforce Training Opportunities for Washingtonians

- ✓ Create Foundations for Success in College
- ✓ Smooth Transitions from K-12 to College and Work
- ✓ Offer Focused Grants and Scholarships
- ✓ Allow Additional Space in Colleges and Universities

Washington's knowledge economy has survived by importing highly educated workers from other states and other nations—leaving the lower-wage jobs to our own citizens. This is simply unacceptable.

Washington should be renowned for our commitment to broad educational opportunities and for a workforce that is among the best trained and educated in the world. Our education system must support every student, hold high expectations, and implement strategies to open doors and encourage full participation in education. There is overwhelming evidence that in the next generation, only those with post-secondary education, including workforce preparation, will be able to succeed in a career.

According to the 2000 census, Washington residents are above average in educational attainment. But these data hide some disturbing facts.

- Only 70 of 100 ninth graders graduate from high school within four years. For Hispanic, African American, and Native American students, the graduation statistic hovers at an alarming 50 percent.
- One third of the adult working age population has only a high school degree or less.
- Washington ranks 36th in the nation in baccalaureate degree attainment.

We cannot compete in the global economy if large segments of our population are not equipped to participate in the workforce.

By providing educational opportunities to Washingtonians, we build personal and financial security not only for each individual, but economic security and prosperity for the state as a whole. Most importantly, the quality of our communities and the vitality of our arts and civic affairs are deeply dependent on well-educated citizens.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Create Foundations for Success in College

Some students face special challenges and do not graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college. Many who do not have English as their first language struggle with its complexities. Some students are in schools that struggle with supporting their learning needs.

- Use new strategies to deliver English Language instruction. Ability to speak and write in English is the key to educational advancement, pursuit of career goals, and participating as a full community member. As in many other instruction areas, one method does not fit all. Learning materials and strategies that are tailored to the needs of various groups of English-language learners will provide successful outcomes more quickly.
- Expand focused assistance to schools and school districts. This program provides a structure to examine the needs struggling schools are facing and to develop a plan to address these needs. It is intensive work, but noticeable student achievement improvements result.

Smooth Transitions from K-12 to College and Work

Students must be well prepared for the next step in their educational careers and in their lives, with the information and support to plan and make informed decisions.

- Expand programs like Navigation 101, which provides adult mentors to help middle and high school students develop specific plans for life after high school.
- Develop a statewide web-based advising system for college students that informs them, when they register for a class, whether the credits will transfer to a BA degree program and how they will be counted. Students who are majoring in education, business, engineering, science or the humanities could be informed of a prescribed set of classes offered at community and technical colleges that will all transfer into their intended major in any public four year school in the state.
- Develop additional Major Ready Degree pathways for majors that continue to have transfer issues.¹⁰

Blurring the line between high school and college allows students to move more quickly through the system and to explore careers. Dual credit programs allow high

¹⁰ Research shows that students who begin work toward a baccalaureate degree at a community college and transfer to a four-year institution take an average of 2 more classes than students who begin at a four-year institution. Nonetheless, there are some majors, like music, that are above this average

school students to simultaneously earn credits toward graduation and toward a college degree or pre-apprenticeship program.

- Provide incentives for teachers and schools to expand dual-credit opportunities through programs like Running Start, Running Start for the Trades, Tech Prep and College in the High School.
- Increase opportunities for career and technical education by expanding Running Start for the Trades, Tech Prep and other occupational programs in high schools and community colleges.

Offer Grants and Scholarships

All students must think of themselves as “college bound,” whether that means earning a four-year college degree or a one-year workforce certificate.

- Provide every qualified Washington high school graduate a grant for one year (45 credits), equal to the current tuition rate at community and technical colleges, to attend any public or private college or university in the state. Eligible students must have graduated from high school with a C average or better, have no felony convictions, and enroll in college within three years of high school graduation (with exceptions for military service).

Students who come from low-income families or whose parents did not attend college are less likely to graduate from high school and go to college.

- Establish a state scholarship program for students from low-income families and for students who are the first in their family to attend college. Students participating in the free- or reduced-price lunch program in the 8th grade, or whose parents did not attend college, would be eligible for a full-tuition scholarship for four years, if they maintain a C average, graduate from high school and meet other eligibility criteria.

Adults with limited education, language barriers and inadequate workplace training are stuck in minimum wage jobs. Increasing opportunities for education advancement and workforce training is both a moral and economic imperative.

- Increase the availability of Opportunity Grants for workforce education. Opportunity Grant pilot programs will begin in 10 community and technical colleges in the fall of 2006. The programs will provide workforce training and other assistance to very low-income adults who have a high school diploma or less, limited English language skills or other barriers that make it difficult for them to complete a college education or training program. Participants will be placed in a

one-year training program that leads to a credential for a job that is currently in demand by local employers.¹¹

- Expand programs for adults that combine workforce training with basic education and English language study. Low-skill or non-English speaking adults who enroll in college must often complete basic education and language classes before they are eligible to enter workforce training. By providing basic education and language skills simultaneously with workforce training, more students are able to complete the program and get jobs, and employers report greater satisfaction with those they hire.

Allow Additional Space in Colleges and Universities

The knowledge-based economy demands an ever more highly trained workforce and Washington is taking steps to increase high school graduation rates and provide grants and scholarships for qualified students. We must plan for the future by taking steps now to ensure that there is adequate space for high school graduates and adults to continue their education and training into college.

- Develop a ten-year enrollment and funding plan to project the number, type and distribution of enrollments needed to accommodate additional high school graduates and returning adults, consistent with the goals of Washington Learns, with emphasis on increased degrees in high demand fields. Use the Global Challenge States to benchmark enrollment and funding levels.
- Coordinate with independent colleges and universities to use existing capacity in selected high demand degree programs, where student demand exceeds capacity in the public colleges and universities, and where there is unmet employer demand for graduates in the field.
 - Offer grants to students who wish to enroll in selected high demand degree programs in independent colleges or universities
 - Contract directly with the independent colleges or universities to serve a specified number of students in selected high demand degree programs

¹¹ Prince and Jenkins (2005) found a “tipping point” – ABE and ESL students who go on to complete at least a year of college credit courses had earnings \$1700 – 2500 higher than students who completed 10 or fewer college credits after ABE/ESL training. Jacobsen et al (2004, 2005) found an additional year of college is associated with 7% higher future earnings.

Connecting: Sharing Responsibility

- ✓ Support State and Local Early Learning Partnerships
- ✓ Encourage Education-to-Work Partnerships
- ✓ Develop Leadership for Change Partnerships

Imagine a child care center filled with early readers enthralled by picture books on loan from the neighborhood elementary school. Imagine your local grocery clerk so aware of your school district's emphasis that he asks your student what he did in math class today. Imagine your neighbor, a fluent speaker of Mandarin, and her neighbor, a Cambodian native, working with the school principal to plan a newsletter for their communities.

Imagine a technology firm contributing a video to illustrate the latest brain research and adding it to a catalogue of web-based professional development opportunities. Imagine a county asking graduate students at a nearby university to develop possible scenarios to solve an environmental issue. Imagine a manufacturing business working with chemical engineering students and researchers at another university to produce a new finish for a production tool.

State government cannot address all the challenges in education alone. Businesses, non-profit organizations, philanthropic foundations, local governments, communities, and parents and citizens across the state all need to participate with state government in a coordinated, concentrated effort to raise overall educational attainment.

Public-private partnerships can bring the assets of each sector together to reduce the preparation gap and increase educational attainment. Private organizations bring credibility, nimbleness and flexible funding to the problem and benefit from an educated workforce. The public sector offers experience and expertise along with public resources. Each of these is crucial to creating a lasting, sustainable, world-class lifelong learning experience.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Support State and Local Early Learning Partnerships

All early learning takes place at the local level, and each community has strengths from which to build. Families and local partners know best how to be inclusive of the cultures represented, the natural opportunities at hand, and the resources with which new programs can be developed. Leadership from state and local agencies, and the Thrive by Five Partnership, can serve as a catalyst for effective local partnerships and help communities achieve positive early learning outcomes.

- Support the Thrive by Five Partnership in ensuring that every child is prepared to succeed in school and life.
- Cultivate local public-private partnerships and help communities build on existing resources to support parents and address the diverse early learning needs of families with young children.
- Provide scholarships for low and moderate-income families to help them access high quality child care and early education.
- Engage parents, caregivers and community members in respectful and trusting partnerships with schools to foster smooth transitions and learner-focused education for children across their years in school.

Encourage Education-to-Work Partnerships

Joint business, labor and education partnerships can help schools prepare students for good jobs in high demand fields and provide industry with well-trained workers.

- Continue the labor, industry and state partnership that supports Running Start for the Trades. This pre-apprenticeship program, offered in high schools and community colleges, leads to direct entry into apprenticeship programs.

Develop Leadership for Change Partnerships

Change is necessary for our economic health and our educational vitality, but working in a fast-paced, changing environment requires specific skills. We are fortunate that Washington's leaders in business and education can help others develop these change and adaptation skills.

- Create a public-private partnership to help lead the transformation of schools into world-class learning centers. Specific skills can be developed to create a vision of powerful schools, inspire the focus and cooperation to realize the vision, and instill high expectations for students, parents and staff.

Accountability: Keeping the Promise

- ✓ Agree to Accountability
- ✓ Establish and Analyze Data

We will hold ourselves and our educational institutions collectively accountable for improving student outcomes. Educators and institutions will be eager participants because they will share a common vision based on clear goals and because the state will be focused on improvement. Citizens will be engaged because the state will communicate clearly about education expenditures and progress made.

The Washington Learns Steering Committee proposes the following 10-Year Goals for our educational system:

1. Parents will be fully supported as their children's first and best teachers, and will have access to culturally-competent, linguistically appropriate support to help their children "learn to learn" in their first years of life.
2. Families will have access to high quality, affordable child care and early education programs staffed by providers and teachers who are adequately trained and compensated.
3. All children will enter kindergarten physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively ready to succeed in school and in life.
4. All students will transition from 3rd grade proficient in reading and mathematics and with demonstrated ability to function as responsible participants in their learning.
5. All students will transition from 8th grade proficient in core academic subjects, demonstrated citizenship skills and an initial plan for high school and beyond.
6. All students will graduate from high school with multicultural and international perspectives and skills to live, learn and work in a global society.
7. All students will complete a rigorous high school course of study and demonstrate proficiencies in core academic skills needed to enter a post-secondary education program or career pathway.
8. All citizens will have access to affordable post-secondary education and training opportunities that provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive personally and professionally.
9. Washington will have a well trained and educated workforce that meets the needs of our knowledge based economy.
10. Washington's research agenda will fuel discoveries and innovations that allow businesses to thrive and compete globally.
11. The state education system will be seamless, efficient and accountable
12. Resources will support achievement of our educational goals.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Agree to Accountability

Raising overall educational attainment cannot be accomplished by any single sector of education alone. Our education system must be integrated with shared responsibility for improvements and success.

- Establish a P-20 Education Council, chaired by the Governor's designee.
 - Membership of the Council will include: The Superintendent of Public Instruction (or designee), and the Executive Directors of the Department of Early Learning, the State Board of Education, the Professional Educators Standards Board, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Council of Presidents.
 - The P-20 Education Council will be charged with:
 - Working with the Government Management and Performance (GMAP) program to measure and evaluate progress toward the 10-Year Goals for our educational system;
 - Recommending improvement strategies when progress is not adequate;
 - Identifying problems and opportunities to improve alignment and articulation across all sectors and institutions;
 - Creating a budget-overlay to make state and local education allocations and expenditures more transparent to citizens;
 - Working with the Office of Financial Management to develop 10- and 25-year projections of capital and operating needs across the system, using demographic and labor market analyses.

Recently, the Office of Financial Management, the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Public Higher Education Institutions agreed to broad goals for program and degree completion. Additional steps to improve accountability in higher education could include the following.

- Develop performance agreements to describe specific, measurable outcomes expected from colleges and universities, such as improvements in high demand degree production, that are expected by the state in exchange for institutional funding.
- Restructure the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

- Change the membership of the Board to include representatives of agencies that are responsible for implementing policies recommended by the Board. Include citizens and students, and one representative each from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Council of Presidents, and the Independent Colleges of Washington.
- Allow the Governor to appoint the Executive Director of the HECB.
- Transfer the existing administrative responsibilities of the HECB to another agency.
- Amend RCW 28B.76.210 to change the date by which the state's public baccalaureate institutions and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges submit an outline of their proposed budget to the HECB from August 1st to July 1st of each odd-numbered year. In the same statute, change the date by which the HECB submits its recommendations on the proposed budgets and the board's budget priorities to the Office of Financial Management from November 1st to October 1st of each even numbered year.

Establish and Analyze Data

Current and ongoing data will be needed by the P-20 Council in order to measure and evaluate progress toward our 10-year world-class educational goals.

- Establish and maintain a robust data system to allow evaluation of student progress and indicators related to the 10-Year Goals.
- Support school districts in the use of quality budgeting and accounting practices.
- Establish a process to monitor school district financial health and include an early warning system to signal potential difficulties.

Creativity: Setting the Standard for Innovation

- ✓ Revise Curriculum, Teacher Training and Preparation
- ✓ Increase Funding for the Arts
- ✓ Develop Local Innovation Zones
- ✓ Launch a Public-Private Campaign to Promote and Reward Creativity

Washington should set a national and international standard for creativity and innovation, such that Washington is known as the “Creativity State.”

Creativity is a major competitive edge. Washington already has deep pools of creative talent, from high-tech start-ups to cutting-edge agricultural research labs, from world-class arts organizations to world-changing philanthropies. Now we must tap all this talent in a strategic, focused effort to benefit all learners in our state.

Citizens equipped with creativity and imagination will thrive in the knowledge economy. We know that the knowledge economy drives a new educational imperative: to educate more people to higher levels. The knowledge economy also drives new organizational imperatives. Old hierarchical, static bureaucracies are being replaced with flexible learning organizations that invest employees with more decision-making and problem-solving authority. In this new economy many skills can be outsourced, but the ability to think creatively and imaginatively gives workers a competitive edge. The globally competitive worker and the active citizen must have skills that enable creative thinking, flexibility, teamwork, and communication. These skills are often called “right-brain thinking.”¹²

In a chapter of his book, “The World is Flat,” Thomas Friedman illustrates the vital importance of right-brain thinking to success in the knowledge economy. The education system of the past, aimed at developing rational and deductive “left-brain” skills for people in a linear factory-model economy, is not equipped to prepare students for success in today’s more fluid knowledge economy. Today’s education system must cultivate more “right-brain” or creative thinkers. Friedman points to the success of Georgia Tech University, which transformed its campus and dramatically

¹² The concept of right-brain and left-brain thinking developed from research in the late 1960s from psychobiologist Roger W. Sperry. Researchers discovered that the human brain has two very different ways of thinking. One (the left brain) is verbal and processes information in an analytical and sequential way, looking first at the pieces and then putting them together to get the whole. The other (the right brain) is visual and processes information in an intuitive and simultaneous way, looking first at the big picture and then the details. Also see Daniel Pink “A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers will rule the future.”

increased graduation rates¹³ by cultivating creativity in its students, by increasing the emphasis on arts abilities and experiences in admissions and campus life. One result was that the university's band and theater and orchestra all improved. But the larger result was that Georgia Tech graduates were equipped with creative problem-solving and solution-imagining skills that gave them a great advantage in the marketplace. The lesson was simple: the most prized graduates are those who can think creatively.

In addition to academic success, students introduced to arts education score significantly higher on measures of creative thinking, fluency, and originality. And by being steeped in creative activities in the classroom, students learn other aptitudes as well: empathy, social and emotional intelligence, self-awareness and the ability to analogize from one experience to another.

Washington schools should be cutting-edge laboratories for creativity, places where students are actively exposed to the arts and engaged in project-based arts learning in many forms. Imagine all students participating in hands-on artistic experiences, like creating sculpture or choreographing a dance recital, that build creativity skills. Imagine disengaged learners who finally connect to school because of a life-changing experience in the arts. Imagine schools that compete with one another for the distinction of being most supportive of the arts and imagination.

We must commit to a culture that promotes and rewards imagination, creativity and innovation in a focused and strategic way. This is not a luxury; it is a necessity now if Washington is to remain a world-class place for people to learn, work, live and grow.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Revise Curriculum, Teacher Training and Preparation

The arts should be integrated into the teaching of all subjects. Schools that effectively incorporate arts into the learning environment become places of discovery and innovation. This transformation requires teachers to be trained in and actively engaged in putting creativity and imagination at the core of all subjects.

- Develop intensive creativity institutes for teachers across all subjects to learn how to integrate arts and creativity into teaching.
- Create a statewide corps of creativity coaches to work with teachers in the classroom.

¹³ Student graduation rates increased from 65 percent to 76 percent. See Excerpt from "Tubas and Test Tubes" from the "The Right Stuff" WORLD IS FLAT: UPDATED and EXPANDED EDITION by Thomas L. Friedman.

- Ensure that programs for the selection and training of teachers put creativity and imagination at the core.
- Emphasize and highlight creative project-based learning in all subjects.

Increase Funding for and Commitment to Arts, Creativity and Imagination

There is considerable evidence that study of the arts contributes to student academic achievement and later success in life. Study of the arts requires complex skill development in observation, analysis, synthesis, creation and evaluation. A recent National Governors' Association publication noted that students who take arts courses have higher math, verbal and overall SAT scores than students who do not take arts classes. Students with high levels of arts involvement are less likely to drop out of high school.¹⁴ Arts have the added benefit of increasing student engagement and motivation, and are especially powerful for reaching struggling and at-risk students, and those who are disengaged from school. A recent study of at-risk youth found that arts participants were more likely to show improvement in their attitudes towards school and self-esteem.¹⁵

- Fund more arts educators.
- Work with school districts to ensure that all four arts disciplines are taught.
- Expand opportunities for study of world languages and cultures and study abroad, in order to open students' imaginations.

Develop Local "Innovation Zones".

- Schools, business, nonprofits and others can develop a joint strategy to raise the "creativity quotient" of their education system, from early learning through postsecondary.
- Grant waivers and flexibility in funding and resource use to communities developing outstanding strategies.

Launch a Public-Private Campaign to Promote and Reward Creativity

- Develop and fund a statewide creativity competition, in which cities, schools, nonprofits and businesses would organize locally and regionally to vie for annual Imagination Awards.

¹⁴ by Grade 10. See Dr. James S. Catterall, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA

¹⁵ Americans for the Arts, 2000.

- Create a media campaign to promote this competition and celebrate innovation in Washington.

Conclusion

The principles and strategies offered by the Washington Learns team are designed to review, remake and rework our entire education system. It is a long term goal, and it will require sustained participation by state and local governments, by parents, teachers and community members, by business and private enterprise, by every level of educational institution, and by students themselves. Our commitment is to a new education system that will excite learners, invigorate teachers, and impress employers.

Together, we can build a world-class, learner-focused education system for Washington.

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